

Brian Adams Fights, Writes, Speaks

Written by Robert Ecksel

Tuesday, 04 January 2005 18:00

Brian Adams is a man of many talents. He was a fine boxer. He is a fine writer. He is a fine commentator. Born in Queens, he moved to another borough at the age of three. "I'm from Brooklyn," Adams tells me. "I'm a Brooklynite."

In addition to being a Brooklynite, Adams is one of the fighter's best friends.

"But it gets hard sometimes," he says. "I'm pro boxing all the way, but it gets hard sometimes."

Brian Adams was an athletic kid growing up in the projects. He ran track. He played hoops. He was a big fan of Magic Johnson. "But everything I got involved in ended up in a fight," Adams says. "I was a sore loser. And I was always little, skinny. So naturally if I say something - everybody else is bigger than me - they'll say something back. So everything I did ended up in fights. That was the only thing I was ever good at."

His intro to the amateurs was something meant to be.

"At the projects in Brooklyn I grew up in," Adams remembers, "a guy won the '85 Golden Gloves, 106-pounds, Terry Branch, and he asked me to come with him to the gym one day. I went down and seen two guys sparring. One guy was ranked number three in the country at the time. He was Spanish and I said: 'I can beat that guy.' Got in there the next day with him and he nearly killed me. So I started to train just to get to him. But I took a liking to it. My first tournament my trainer put me in an open class - so I never fought novice - and made it to the finals. Started at sixteen. Had my first fight at seventeen."

Adams was gifted. To call him a natural might be an overstatement, but he found what he was looking for in the amateurs.

"I fought New York Golden Gloves. Two National Golden Glove finals. The amateurs were just fun to me. It's not like it is today in terms of the pros. In the amateurs there's more incentives for you to win. You get to travel. You get to meet people. You get legitimate exposure. And you get to really say you're the best. You're number one because you have to fight everybody to get to number one. Whereas the pros you can cut corners, dodge people," Adams says. "There's more sinners in the pros than the amateurs."

There are lots of sinners in boxing. There are even some saints. But this is a sport where the wise watch out for their own interests.

"Certain things you don't need an education to know," says Adams. "You should know, without an education, without books, that you have to look after your own finances. Most fighters feel that the money will keep coming, coming, coming. I had a conversation with Zab Judah a year ago about the same situation. You take for granted that you're always going to be on top."

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Adams turned pro on March 28, 1997 with a TKO over Angel Ojeda in Yonkers and began winning his fights, but like most fighters he was plagued with hand problems. In his fifth fight he re-injured a hand which gave him trouble in the amateurs. That set the tone for the rest of his career.

In his ninth fight Adams fought Daniel Attah in Philadelphia. They were both 7-0 at the time. The first punch he threw in the first round . . . Adams broke his hand.

"I kept having hand problems, too many hand problems," he says. "After my second surgery, to be perfectly honest, I shoulda stopped. But at that point it's like: make me or break me, all or nothing. I kept doing it. I kept breaking my hand."

He kept breaking his hand, but he kept fighting. Adams lost to Daniel Alicea in April 2002. Two fights and a little more than a year later, he fought Juan Valenzuela in Fort Worth, Texas

"I was sorta upset because I knew my hand was broke going into the fight, but I took it anyway, when I shouldn't have. And when I fought Valenzuela, I'm like: Wow! The strongest dude by far I ever been in the ring with. And I never been hurt, never been rattled, never been dropped. He hurt me in the second round and I said to myself: it's time to go. Every punch he hurt me. That dude was just so strong. My last fight was June 17, last year, against Valenzuela."

Brian Adams is calm.

"Since that day, I never worked out one day, never had the desire to work out, and haven't been to a gym. Boxing doesn't cross my mind. The only time I think about boxing is when I'm holding a conversation and someone mentions it to me. Other than that I don't miss it one bit," Adams says. "I'm at peace. I'm at peace with the way things went with my career. I was able to develop some relationships, make some friends, and now I'm able to translate what I know and what I have seen to other people through my writing and commentating."

Adams uses his commentating to further the fights. He uses his writing to advocate for the fighters.

"I really do want other boxers to understand that a tough guy image may last a minute and you may make some good money doing it, but what about tomorrow? If we lose tomorrow, who's gonna wanna be affiliated with you? No one. Because it's all about image. Kobe Bryant, one of the best basketball players, the minute he got charged, Coca Cola, Sprite, McDonald's - they're gonna drop him. It's all about image. And boxers need to understand that. Today you may make a ton of money acting wild. Mike Tyson, if he can't fight tomorrow, what's he going to do? Mike is cool. He's not the way people think. The way people see. He's not really like that. That's all an act. He's a loner. He really doesn't like people. But he's cool."

Mike is cool. He is one soulful brother. But he is not family fare.

"HBO is looking right now - especially right now - for the next star. They're looking for that clean-cut boxer. Look at Joe Mesi," says Adams. "HBO was looking for that. Joe Mesi. HBO

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was hot on him. He's articulate. He speaks well. Nice looking. They're not looking for the Mayorga types. Maybe fight by fight, but not a contract or something they can invest in. They're not looking for that. I just want all boxers to see that."

Brian Adams has been there and done that and is in a position to know.

"That's the message I want to get out," he says. "It's time for boxers to stop letting outsiders dictate what goes on - the promoters, managers, entourages - because the bottom line is this: at the end of the day the manager's going to say 'Okay, you're done' and go on to something new. Look at every pro sport. Every time an athlete retires they get into the same field, commentary or coaching or something. Look at boxing. How many former boxers and commentating champions are there? How many trainers? Why? Because they spend too much time showing that they can't lead. They've proven that they can't lead. They've proven that other people have to lead them. And in the afterlife, no one's going to take 'em serious."

Brian Adams retired with a record of 17-4-1 (8 KOs). He is the rare ex-fighter who looks to the future and not to the past.